

March 1, 2016

Dear (Madam Chair or Mr. Chairman) and members of the committee.

My name is Christopher Pooler of 2 Grove St. in Milford, CT, and I am addressing House Bill No. 5363, concerning the Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals Procedure

The CT Affordable Housing Law 8-30G in its current state, is allowing developers to clearly bypass local zoning regulations, in order to create developments that are much to dense for the small parcels of land on which they are being proposed and constructed. It is unfortunate that a law that has good intentions is being abused, and actually diminishing the character of established and sometimes historic neighborhoods, by allowing construction of these developments which do not conform to the surrounding area.

I am not disagreeing that we need more affordable housing options, as we all know that our state of CT is a costly place to live, but that these projects should be constructed in areas that can accommodate them, while being in compliance with local zoning rules and regulations. Some waivers or variances would be expected, but a parcel of land that is less than a half-acre in size, and zoned for a single house only, should not be allowed to transform into a development of two or more buildings with multiple units each. This is happening with increased frequency as developers realize that they can maximize profits by including two or three units deemed as "affordable" into their plans. This allows them to construct more buildings or units than local ordinances would allow if it were not for the 8-30G law. Although these buildings may physically fit onto the small amount of land that they occupy, they allow little space for adequate parking and snow removal, or lawns for recreation. These developments also encroach upon the perimeter of the existing neighboring houses and yards, in ways that would not be allowed by local zoning regulations, nor would any homeowner expect to be permissible. It is not reassuring to know that any neighboring home or parcel of land that is sold, could be bought by a developer, who will in turn look at profit more than quality of life issues, not only for those existing residents in the surrounding neighborhood, but also for the tenants or owners of the new construction that have to contend with physical space constraints imposed by these overly dense housing projects.

In conclusion, I am seeking that those that have the ability to make reforms to the 8-30G Affordable Housing Law, do so without delay. For each project that is approved and constructed which is not in conformance to local Planning and Zoning laws, it detracts from the overall aesthetics of the surrounding area, creates burdens with the lack of parking and recreational areas, lowers property values of existing homes in the immediate vicinity, and once the new construction is complete, the character of the neighborhood is forever changed.

Thank you.

Christopher Pooler